

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANJUL

USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY PRAIA

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING MAY 5, 1978

FOLLOWING IS ANUNOFFICIAL UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL
VERISON WILL FOLLOW.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN TELL US ABOUT THE
STATE OF KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE SITUATION INVOLVING THE
USE OF SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES IN ANGOLA AND THE U.S. ATTITU-
TUDE TOWARD THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME, AND U.S. ACTIVITIES,
IF ANY?

A. AS WAS NOTED IN OUR STATEMENT ISSUED LAST NIGHT, WE
HAVE EXPRESSED OUR GRAVE CONCERN OVER THIS ACTION TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA. THUS FAR WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED
A RESPONSE FROM THE SOUTH AFRICANS.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT THE STATE OF ACTION
THERE?

A. WE DON'T HAVE INFORMATION AVAILABLE BEYOND WHAT WE
HAVE SEEN IN THE PRESS OR WHAT IS AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS
ON THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE OPERATION.

JUDGING FROM PRESS REPORTS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE
SOUTH AFRICANS REGARD THE OPERATION AS HAVING BEEN
CONCLUDED.

Q. NOW, CAN YOU TELL US IF THE UNITED STATES' ACTION
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WAS COORDINATED WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS?

A. I AM NOT INFORMED OF COORDINATION WITH OTHER GOVERN-
MENTS. LET ME SAY THAT, OF COURSE, ON ANY QUESTION
REGARDING THAT PART OF AFRICA -- AND PRIMARILY WE ARE
SPEAKING ON THE FUTURE OF NAMIBIA -- WE ARE IN CLOSE
TOUCH WITH THE FIVE STATES INVOLVED IN THE CONTACT GROUP.

Q. WHAT I DON'T KNOW IS WHETHER THE UNITED STATES'S
EXPRESSION OF GRAVE CONCERN WAS A COMBINED EXPRESSION
JOINED IN BY OTHER WESTERN POWERS.

A. THE STATEMENT THAT WE MADE LAST NIGHT WAS A STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. WE ARE IN
TOUCH WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE CONTACT GROUP REGARDING
SPECIFICALLY WHAT, IF ANY, STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE U.N. REGARDING THIS ACTION.

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN TELL US ABOUT THE INTER-
ACTION, IF ANY, BETWEEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACTION AND
THE POTENTIAL OR PROSPECT FOR RESOLVING THE NAMIBIAN
SITUATION?

A. NOT IN ANY DETAIL. I CAN JUST SAY THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO OUR PROPOSAL FOR A NAMIBIAN SETTLEMENT. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO SECURE FULL AGREEMENT OF ALL THE PARTIES TO THIS PROPOSAL. FRANKLY, THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACTION WILL NOT BE HELPFUL. NONETHELESS, WE BELIEVE THAT OUR PROPOSAL OFFERS THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE COMPLEX OF PROBLEMS SURROUNDING NAMIBIA. THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS SIMPLY SERVE TO EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR A RAPID MOVE TOWARD A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

Q. KEN, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT THE SWAPO ATTACKS FROM ANGOLA WHICH PROMPTED THE SOUTH AFRICAN INCURSION?

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A. I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANYTHING SPECIFIC ON THAT. BUT NATURALLY WE WOULD VIEW ANY ACTIONS WHICH AREN'T IN ACCORD WITH THIS MOVE TOWARD THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AS OBJECTS OF CONCERN, AND WE DO HOPE THAT EFFORTS WILL BE CENTERED ON THESE PEACEFUL EFFORTS.

Q. IS OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE CUBANS OCCUPYING ANGOLA AS GRAVE, LESS GRAVE OR MORE GRAVE THAN OUR CONCERN ABOUT THIS SOUTH AFRICAN INCURSION?

A. I AM REALLY NOT PREPARED TO MAKE COMPARISONS.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH NUJOMA AND SWAPO ON THE CONTACT GROUP'S PLAN?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANY PRECISE INFORMATION ON THAT. I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WILL BE A MEETING, PROBABLY NEXT WEEK.

Q. AND DO YOU KNOW WHERE AND WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

A. HERE AGAIN I DON'T HAVE THE DETAILS. THIS WOULD PROBABLY BE IN NEW YORK. I THINK THE FULLER INFORMATION THOUGH, COULD BE GOTTEN FROM OUR MISSION IN NEW YORK.

Q. KEN, IS IT THE AMERICAN ASSESSMENT AT THIS TIME, GIVEN YOUR STATEMENT CONCERNING GRAVE CONCERN -- IS IT THE AMERICAN ASSESSMENT THAT THE TIMING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACTION IS DELIBERATELY UNDERTAKEN, OR APPEARS TO BE DELIBERATELY UNDERTAKEN, FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES AT THIS PARTICULAR JUNCTURE OF THE NAMIBIAN NEGOTIATIONS?

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A. I HAVE NO WAY OF EVALUATING THAT. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. DO YOU CONSIDER THE ATTACK ON ANGOLA A VIOLATION OF ANGOLA'S TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES?

A. I AM NOT PREPARED TO QUALIFY IT, BUT WHEN ONE FORCE CROSSES THE TERRITORY OR BOUNDARY OF ANOTHER IT IS, OF COURSE, SOMETHING THAT IS NOT NORMALLY IN CONFORMITY WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW. THE PROBLEM IS THIS PARTICULAR CASE IS WE DON'T HAVE THE DETAILS ON IT -- IF THERE WAS QUESTION OF HOT PURSUIT OR WHAT.

Q. DO YOU RECALL, HAS THE ADMINISTRATION OR THE STATE DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY CRITICIZED SWAPO FOR ITS RAIDS INTO SOUTHWEST AFRICA?

A. I DON'T HAVE RIGHT WITH ME BACKGROUND ON WHAT COMMENTS WE MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE MADE ON SWAPO ACTIONS.

Q. COULD THAT BE LOOKED UP POSSIBLY? BECAUSE THE SOUTH AFRICANS DID CLAIM AND BOTHA, IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE OF TWO WEEKS AGO IN PRETORIA, TALKED ABOUT THE MURDEROUS

RAIDS, THE RAPES, AND EVERYTHING ELSE AND THAT UNTIL THIS STOPPED HE COULDN'T SEE SOUTH AFRICA JOINING IN A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OR THE WESTERN PROPOSALS? NOW, IT DOESN'T SEEM TO ME YOU ARE VERY EVEN-HANDED ON THIS ONE.

A. YOU ARE ASKING IF WE HAVE MADE A PREVIOUS COMMENT ON ACTIONS BY SWAPO IN REGARD TO NAMIBIA? I WILL CHECK THAT.

Q. COULD YOU TELL US WHAT THE PRESENT STATE OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OR INACTIVITY IS CONCERNING NAMIBIA AND RHODESIA? I UNDERSTAND THERE IS A REPORT THAT AMBASSADOR LOW IS AGAIN TAKING ON A MISSION.

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A. REGARDING NAMIBIA, I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WILL BE SOME CONSULTATIONS NEXT WEEK, ALTHOUGH I DON'T HAVE THE DETAILS.

Q. THERE IS A REPORT IN THE BRITISH PRESS THAT AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING HAS BEEN SET UP FOR THE 27TH OF MAY, WHICH HAS BEEN DENIED IN SALISBURY. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING

ON THAT?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THAT. I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONFIRM THAT. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING THAT WOULD. BUT YOU MAY HAVE NOTED THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY THAT JOHN GRAHAM OF FOREIGN COMMONWEALTH OFFICE, AS WELL AS AMBASSADOR STEPHEN LOW, WOULD BE UNDERTAKING EXHAUSTIVE CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL PARTIES TO THE RHODESIAN DISPUTE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE EXACT TIMING OF THESE TALKS HAS NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED, BUT THE EFFORT IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR INTENTION TO PURSUE EVERY AVENUE TO BRING THE RHODESIAN PARTIES TOGETHER FOR TALKS.

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